

Urges Colleagues and Army Corps of Engineers for Action in Light of New Study

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee and Co-Chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, said that a study released today offers permanent solutions for keeping Asian Carp out of the Great Lakes and called on the Army Corps for swift action.

Today, the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative released findings in "Restoring the Natural Divide", analyzing various engineering options to separate the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins in the Chicago Area Waterway System to prevent inter-basin movement of harmful aquatic invasive species including Asian carp.

As a leader on Great Lakes issues, Slaughter is encouraging her colleagues in the Great Lakes Task Force to join her in writing to leading officials at the Army Corps of Engineers. The letter urges the Army Corps of Engineers to look closely at today's findings as they simultaneously conduct their own study, the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS), and calls on the Corps to shorten the timeline for releasing GLMRIS. Army Corps is not scheduled to conclude GLMRIS until late 2015.

"The Great Lakes make up 20 percent of the world's freshwater and it is my belief that we must do everything to protect them. In Western New York we rely on the Great Lakes for fishing, shipping and recreation and the introduction of Asian carp could be devastating to the lakes' ecosystem and regional economy," said Slaughter, a co-chair of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force. "The study released today makes clear that there are viable solutions to protect the Lakes from this invasive species. Time is a luxury we don't have. Genetic material from the carp have already been found in the Chicago Area Water System (CAWS) past the electronic barriers, which are currently our only line of defense against the carp. That is why I'm urging today for the Army Corps of Engineers to move quickly on their study of this issue."

Slaughter has noted in the past that once an invasive species such as Asian carp is allowed to take hold in any part of the Great Lakes system, it is only a matter of time until the species spreads to the rest of the lakes.

In a [November letter to House Appropriations Committee leaders](#) , Slaughter said, along with other Great Lakes advocates,

"The lakes provide invaluable recreational opportunities and support shipping, fishing, boating and tourism industries that generate 1.5 million jobs and \$62 billion in wages. Restoring the Great Lakes advances our regional strategy to create jobs, stimulate economic development and invest in freshwater resources and waterfront communities."

Congresswoman Slaughter has been the Co-Chair of the Great Lakes Task Force since 2005. The Task Force is a bipartisan organization that cooperates to enhance the economic and environmental health of the Great Lakes. Founded in the mid-1980s, Task Force members work to advocate for policies and programs that enhance our unique natural resource—the Great Lakes.